

## Travel, transport and communication to and from Ireland, c. AD 400–1100: an archaeological perspective

Chris Loveluck (University of Nottingham) and Aidan O’Sullivan (University College Dublin)

### Introduction & context

How did Irish *peregrini*, clerics and manuscripts physically move back and forth between Ireland and the Continent in the early middle ages, and did they utilise existing and ongoing economic and trading links between Irish ports and those along the Atlantic coast of Britain, Francia and Iberia? What is the evidence for long-distance maritime trade and exchange between Ireland and continental Europe in the sixth and seventh centuries, and afterwards? Can we identify where Irish and other merchant-mariners were sailing to and from in their sea voyages? How might we better exploit archaeological evidence, historical sources and other data, towards deepening our understanding of Irish travel, transport and communication to Atlantic Europe, and setting research agendas for the future? This paper will attempt to deal with these questions, and to create a sense of how people, goods and ideas were physically moved along the sea-ways between Ireland and early medieval Europe.

The paper builds on the work of other scholars who have previously traced connections between Ireland and its neighbours, and it follows on particularly from Jonathan Wooding’s seminal paper ‘Trade as a factor in the transmission of texts between Ireland and the Continent in the sixth and seventh centuries’. We do not attempt to reproduce that paper, and the reader is advised to consult it directly for historical references to the movement of merchants and clerics.<sup>1</sup> Rather, in this paper we shall examine the extensive new archaeological evidence for the early Irish medieval economy, trade and exchange, evidence which has accrued during the explosion of developer-led archaeological research in Ireland in recent decades and has highlighted the importance of the Atlantic-facing regions of Europe in helping to drive the social, economic and political transformations of early medieval western Christendom.<sup>2</sup> An archaeological re-assessment of links between Ireland, Britain and continental Europe is, therefore, an essential prerequisite to understanding the role and impact of the Irish in early medieval Europe. An assessment of this role between the fifth and eleventh centuries has to be conducted within the context of the maritime cultural landscapes of Atlantic Europe and the Channel, and the principal river ‘transport corridors’ leading into the interior of continental Europe and ultimately to the Mediterranean.<sup>3</sup>

In the first place it is important to emphasise the significant growth and expansion of the early medieval Irish population and economy in the sixth and seventh centuries AD, in the run up to the creation of one of the richest archaeological landscapes in the world.<sup>4</sup> There is abundant archaeological evidence for early medieval settlement expansion from the late fifth to the early sixth century, probably as a response to population growth, with tens of thousands of enclosed settlements across the island. It is also clear that Irish agriculture in the sixth and seventh centuries was innovative and effective, consisting of a sophisticated dairy economy and cereal crops that were processed using corn-drying kilns and horizontal water

mills. It is also clear that an expansionary early Irish church was quickly establishing itself as both a political and economic power, and was itself probably investing in agriculture, both through its own estates and through tithes and tributes received from the laity, with a possible focus on grain production and processing. Indeed, it seems apparent that the early Irish economy was creating an agricultural and commodities surplus beyond the needs of subsistence and local lordly-client socio-economic relationships and possibly aimed at long-distance trade. It seems likely, for example, that the early medieval political territory of Brega, whence evidence for increased agricultural activities survives and which was flanked to the east by the Irish Sea coast, was partly involved in agricultural production for long-distance trade across the Irish Sea. At other locations along the Irish coastline there is evidence for imported commodities, such as pottery and glass. It may be that these were exchanged for exports in the form of locally-produced foodstuffs like butter and flour, as well as other commodities suitable for trade like hides, leather, vellum, livestock, and slaves. It also seems likely that Irish and foreign merchant-mariners were actively involved as agents in this trade, perhaps even as its principal instigators, rather than simply serving elite patrons. We know unfortunately little about the types of vessels being used, and most studies have tended to emphasise that the Irish were using coracle-like vessels built of wood and hides. However, as Wooding has pointed out, the range of terms for ships and boats in Adomnán's Life of Columba, including the words *cimbul*, *curucus*, *nauis*, *longenauis* and *barca* at least imply that a range of types of sea-going vessels, both native and foreign, could have been seen in Irish coastal waters in the sixth and seventh centuries.<sup>5</sup>

### **Irish travel and trade in continental Europe, c. AD 400–850**

The archaeological evidence for trade with the Continent is principally in the form of imported pottery, of a range of types from the Mediterranean and western Francia. The first form of evidence for trade with the Mediterranean which we shall describe is Phocaean Red Slipware (PRSW) and African Red Slipware (ARSW). PRSW originated in western Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey) and is a type of bowl, of a soft orange-red, pink or brownish-red fabric, covered with a dark-red wash.<sup>6</sup> It broadly dates to the mid-fifth to mid-sixth century and is largely concentrated in the regions between the Black Sea and Sicily.<sup>7</sup> The presence of PRSW in Ireland probably dates to the late fifth to early sixth century, and is found in a range of early medieval Irish settlements, usually of high status, including the probable royal sites at Garranes (Co. Cork) and Clogher (Co. Tyrone), as well as at Mount Offaly (Co. Dublin), and a burial ground at Collierstown (Co. Meath). ARSW was produced in northern Africa from the first to the seventh century and was dispersed largely through the port of Carthage. It was imported into western Britain and Ireland during the fifth and sixth century and a single example is known from a *ráth*, an enclosed settlement, at Kilree (Co. Kilkenny).<sup>8</sup> It is likely that PRSW were prestigious luxury table ware used during feasting at high-status sites.

Another important indicator of Mediterranean trade connections are the relatively numerous sherds of Late Roman Amphorae (LRA) found in Ireland (and formerly known as “B-ware”). LRA pottery has been found on at least twenty Irish early medieval sites, including settlements, settlements with burial grounds (so-called ‘settlement-cemeteries’) and

ecclesiastical sites. Various different types are known: LRA1 (formerly known as Bii) is typified by large wheel-made, cylindrical amphorae, probably manufactured in south-east Asia Minor and northern Syria, and has been found in Ireland at such sites as the early medieval royal residence of Garranes (Co. Cork), early medieval monastic settlements at Inishcealtra (Co. Clare), Reask (Co. Kerry), the Rock of Cashel (Co. Tipperary), and the traders' landing place at Dalkey Island (Co. Dublin). LRA2 (Bi) are large, wheel-made, cylindrical amphorae produced in the Peloponnese in southern Greece and possibly the Aegean Islands of Chios and Kos. It has been found on at least seven Irish sites, both secular and ecclesiastical, such as the coastal settlement at Colp West (Co. Meath). LRA3 (Biv) are, again, wheel-made amphorae from the Aegean or Asia Minor, which are found in southern Britain, but not in Ireland. There are also other LRA types, such as Biii/B misc, and Bv, some of which are known in Ireland. Conflicting interpretations have been suggested for the presence of these Late Roman amphorae. They may have been used for transporting olive oil and/or wine, with LRA1 in particular being associated with the wine trade. However, it is also possible that their usage varied depending on the occasion, sometimes being used for carrying wine, and sometimes for carrying olive oils and other commodities, but without a fixed purpose being attached to a particular type.<sup>9</sup>

The Phocaean Red-Slipwares, African Red-Slipwares, and the Late Roman Amphorae found in Ireland and western Britain certainly reflect contacts with the Mediterranean world in the late fifth and early sixth century. The distribution clusters of Phocaean Red-Slipware along the southern and western coasts of Iberia, as well as in southwest Britain and southern Ireland suggest, in particular, a trade route travelling out of the Straits of Gibraltar and up the Atlantic coast in the sixth century.<sup>10</sup> The discovery of a glass flagon from Tintagel (Cornwall) identical to cemetery finds from sixth- or seventh-century Malaga and Cadiz, further reinforces the existence of a trade route along the Atlantic coast of Iberia to Britain.<sup>11</sup> Ewan Campbell has convincingly argued that this reflects sixth-century trade led by Byzantine merchants in search of tin and lead from southwest Britain, and perhaps gold and copper from southern Ireland. The argument that lead and tin were the targets of trade by Byzantine merchants is supported by lead isotope analyses of lead found in the Byzantine Mediterranean and emerging historic pollution evidence from Cornwall, in addition to the oft-cited textual evidence for the activities of Byzantine merchants along the coast of Atlantic Europe, who travelled to Merida (central Spain), probably via the Guadiana estuary and river-valley, and to southwest Britain to trade for tin.<sup>12</sup> It has not been suggested, to date, that sixth-century Irish or British mariners were themselves capable of trading all the way down the Atlantic coast to the Mediterranean, and the very limited quantities of Mediterranean imports, such as Phocaean red slipware, on the Atlantic coast of France certainly do not suggest that they were trans-shipped over land from the Mediterranean coast, along the Garonne and into the Bay of Biscay, via the Gironde estuary.

Yet, archaeological evidence certainly indicates direct contacts between the societies living around the Irish Sea and those of western and southern France in the sixth and seventh centuries, via the Atlantic coast, attested in a number of archaeological media, namely, stone sculpture, pottery, and glass vessels. For example, Jeremy Knight drew attention to the

similarities between incised cross memorials made of stone from the sixth to seventh centuries from Nantes (Loire Atlantique) and Pouillé (Vienne), with Irish examples at Inishmurray (Co. Sligo) and Ardwall Isle (Dumfries and Galloway).<sup>13</sup> An important source of evidence for trading connections between Ireland and western Francia in particular is the pottery known in Britain and Ireland as “E-ware” and in western France as cream/white-ware pottery. Significant amounts of E-ware/French white-ware pottery are present particularly along the eastern coast of Ireland and the western coast of Britain, in Cornwall, south Wales and western Scotland. Indeed, archaeological investigations in Ireland in the last decade have increased the amount of E-ware found in Ireland.<sup>14</sup> It seems to have been imported into Ireland in between c. 525 and 700, so there may be an overlap with some Mediterranean pottery. It is found in a relatively large number of Irish sites, with at least 55 sites known to have produced it, including early medieval *ráths*, crannógs, settlement enclosures and monastic settlements. Although found across a large part of the island, it is particularly concentrated in two areas; the Strangford Lough region in County Down, in northeast Ireland, and in northeastern Leinster, from Dublin, along the Meath coastline to County Louth – effectively the political territories of north Leinster, Brega in particular. E-ware pottery is found in various forms, including jars, beakers, bowls, pitchers and pot lids. It may have been used to transport such foods as nuts, spices, honey, or dyestuffs and the perforated lids suggest it may also have been used for cooking (the perforations being used to release steam).

The source of this western French whiteware is uncertain, as kilns that produced it have never been found, but the character of the clay would suggest a production area in the lower Charente or Saintonge region. Distributions of this ware also occur in small numbers in Nantes and up the Loire as far as Tours, and several sherds have also been found at Le Yaudet (Côtes-d’Armor) on the northern coast of Brittany.<sup>15</sup> A distribution of glass vessels around the Irish Sea, predominantly cone beakers possibly produced in the Bordeaux region of southwest France, mirrors the distribution of E-ware pottery.<sup>16</sup> Campbell dates the deposition of these artefacts to the sixth and earlier seventh centuries, and sees the Irish-Sea distribution of these western French products as the reflection of directional trade networks controlled by mariner-merchants from the Atlantic region of Merovingian France. He arrived at this conclusion thanks to what he saw as the consistent and recurrent nature of the import assemblages of E-ware and glass vessels, which would have been more mixed in terms of goods represented if they had arrived by the more general and opportunistic coastal trade, suggested by Wooding.<sup>17</sup>

Campbell’s view that maritime-merchant initiative came predominantly from the mariners of western France may significantly understate the activities of insular merchants within the maritime exchange networks of Atlantic Europe. Wooding, Jean-Michel Picard, and more recently Olivier Bruand, have all highlighted the presence of Irish, British/Breton and Anglo-Saxon merchants around the Loire estuary, as far inland as Nantes, predominantly within the context of trade in salt. The Saints’ Lives of Columbanus and Filibert provide textual ‘snapshots’ of the presence and some of the activities of these merchant-mariners. Thus, for example, there is a reference in the Life of Columbanus to the saint being taken back to Ireland in the early seventh century via an Irish ship that happened to be at Nantes. The

eighth-century Life of Filibert also records the arrival at Noirmoutier of Irish ships with various goods aboard, including a large quantity of shoes and clothes for the brethren.<sup>18</sup> The opportunistic actions of some of these mariner-merchants at Noirmoutier, including the stealing of lead,<sup>19</sup> would suggest that these merchants were more than tied agents of ecclesiastical institutions or secular elites. They appear to have had independence of action for themselves beyond any obligation to any individuals or institutions for whom they may have acted. Indeed, it is probably worth remembering that once a merchant was out at sea he had the option of returning, or not returning, to any patron, depending on whether or not he considered it worthwhile to himself and his crew.

Indeed, Bruand's study (2008) of the salt producers of the Loire estuary (at Baie de Bourgneuf) and the Charente estuary also highlights that most of the salt producers and salt traders along the Loire were free proprietors rather than landless clients of major ecclesiastical institutions. The latter, in many instances, were simply given existing salterns. Mariner merchants from Ireland and Britain who traded salt in the vibrant trading zone between the Loire and Charente estuaries did not only trade at the beach market at Noirmoutier. They also traded at a host of smaller landing places, some of which are known from textual sources and others are now emerging from archaeological discoveries; for example, the site known as *Portus Castellii* can possibly be identified with Renac.<sup>20</sup> By the Carolingian period, a principal taxation centre and port for the salt trade in the Loire estuary existed at the site of *Portus Vertraria*, which was located somewhere on the Vendee bank of the Loire, close to its estuary, but the exact location of the settlement is still unknown. This *portus* was located at an existing Merovingian royal estate centre, and may represent a Carolingian attempt to tax the salt trade on a more systematic basis than had occurred in the seventh century.<sup>21</sup>

The paramount role of the region between the Charente and Loire estuaries in the Atlantic salt trade during the sixth to seventh century could well account for the apparent homogeneity of import patterns of E-ware and glass vessels in Ireland and western Britain. The most likely source area for E-ware is the Saintonge and the lower Charente valley, and much of it could have arrived in vessels involved in the salt trade. This may not only have entailed Irish and British merchants travelling down to the Charente estuary. There is also evidence in the form of the seventh-century, clinker-built coaster vessel known as Port Berteau II, found downriver from Saintes, to show that coastal vessels from the lower Charente valley could also have carried salt and pottery northwards to the Loire estuary trading places, possibly more frequented by insular mariners.<sup>22</sup> Such coastal trade from the Charente to the Loire could also account for the E-ware distribution in the Loire estuary, Nantes, and Tours. The targeting of these specific salt producing regions by Irish and British merchants, which coincided with the primary locus of E-ware production, would negate the need for a paramount role for mariners from western France controlling the insular distribution of imports. Campbell dates the demise of E-ware production to the early seventh century but the evidence of Merovingian gold *tremissis* coinage, struck up until the middle decades of the seventh century and also found in small quantities in Ireland,<sup>23</sup> would suggest that contacts continued with Atlantic France. This is indicated more emphatically in the textually-attested actions of Irish and

British merchants in the Loire estuary, during the late seventh century. The focus of Irish merchants on trading leather goods at Noirmoutier in the later seventh century also highlights the perishable and limited archaeological visibility of most Irish trade in Atlantic France.<sup>24</sup> Finally, there is also the intriguing possibility that Irish merchants were trading for salt, which was not being produced in Ireland but would of course have been an important means of preserving and transporting Irish dairy produce, especially butter, between Ireland and the Continent.

On the basis of the archaeological evidence, there appear to have been two main geographical and chronological trade networks in operation between continental Europe and Ireland in the sixth and seventh centuries, as defined by Campbell.<sup>25</sup> The first is a sixth-century network running from the Mediterranean northward along the west coast of Iberia to the Bay of Biscay, and hence to southern Ireland and southwest Britain. Campbell believes this to have been a maritime network operated by Byzantine merchants in search of metals, such as tin and lead, without any suggestion of maritime travel by Irish or British mariners along the Atlantic coast to the Mediterranean. This ceased to exist in the mid to late sixth century, because of changes in the western Mediterranean economy. The second network was focussed on trading links between western Britain and Ireland and the west coast of France, particularly estuaries and river valleys of the Gironde (in the sixth century) and the Charente and Loire in the sixth and seventh centuries.. Contrary to Campbell's view that this second network was controlled mainly by merchants from western France, it is argued here on the basis of the textual and archaeological sources that mariners from Ireland and western Britain could have played an equal role to any continental mariners in this maritime exchange. Indeed, the textual sources indicate continuity of trade by Irish mariners at the mouth of the Loire long after the end of E-ware production in the early seventh century. What cannot be denied, however, is the huge reduction in the archaeological visibility of evidence for links between Ireland and continental Europe, especially the Mediterranean, after the mid seventh century.

The latest finds of Mediterranean material around the Irish Sea from the seventh century are all found on sites in western Britain, namely, the later sixth or early seventh-century St Menas *ampulla* brought back from Egypt as a pilgrim's souvenir which was found at the beach trading site at Meols (Wirral),<sup>26</sup> the Byzantine brass censor from Glastonbury (Somerset), the Byzantine ring intaglio from Rhosyr, near Cefn Cwmwd in Anglesey, the Byzantine glass and gold mosaic tessera from Dunadd (Argyll), and also from Dunadd, the mineral orpiment (arsenic sulphide mineral) originating from Vesuvius in the Bay of Naples, which was used to produce a yellow dye for manuscript illumination.<sup>27</sup> The orpiment may have been acquired by the secular rulers of the Dalriadic fortified centre of Dunadd as a gift for the nearby Irish-founded monastic community of Iona. That the orpiment might have been acquired through secular networks for use in a monastic scriptorium rather than directly via ecclesiastical connections, is a reminder that we should not assume that ecclesiastical networks were the paramount long-distance networks.

The arrival of Mediterranean goods certainly diminished over the course of the seventh century but the existing maritime infrastructure of mariners and shipping to western France for the salt trade and the equally archaeologically invisible trade of wine in barrels, continued through the seventh and eighth centuries. This transport infrastructure supported the principal pilgrimage route from Ireland to the Mediterranean, which ran along the Loire valley to Nantes and Tours, and hence to the Rhône valley, the Mediterranean, Italy, and Rome. Indeed, the route via the Loire valley, the veneration of St Martin of Tours by Irish monastic institutions from the 640s, and subsequent fictitious additions to St Patrick's Lives written between the ninth and eleventh centuries (in the *Vita Tripartita* and the *Vita Tertia Patricii*), including his receiving the tonsure from Martin at Tours, his visit to Auxerre, and his visit to Rome, reflects the importance of this 'sacred routeway' to Italy.<sup>28</sup> Further evidence of the presence of Irish travelling along the Loire valley is provided as an aside in the Life of Alcuin, written in the early ninth century, when monks at Alcuin's monastery of St Martin at Tours assume that an Anglo-Saxon visitor at the gates must be British or Irish.<sup>29</sup>

The housing of Irish pilgrims en route to Rome was achieved through the creation of *hospitalia Scottorum* (also written as *hospitalia Scothorum*), and in Rome itself one can assume that pilgrims from Ireland or Scotland had their own *schola peregrinorum*, like the Franks, Frisians, Anglo-Saxons, and Lombards. These were ethnically discrete communities of foreigners in Rome which housed pilgrims and also merchants, and by the late eighth century each *schola* also provided a military function in the defence of Rome, in which role they served successfully during the Arab raid on Rome in 846.<sup>30</sup> Whether Irish pilgrims travelled to the eastern Mediterranean is much more debatable for the period between the seventh and ninth centuries. Thomas O'Loughlin and others have argued convincingly that Arculf, supposedly a ship-wrecked Frankish bishop who travelled in Palestine, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome, was in fact no more than a literary device in the biblical exegesis of Adomnan's *De Locis Sanctis*, which contains an account of his travels.<sup>31</sup> Yet, there was nothing to stop Irish pilgrims using the same Mediterranean shipping and mercantile routeways as the Anglo-Saxon, Willibald, on his pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the 720s.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, the region of Vesuvius, from which the orpiment at Dunadd originated, was certainly on the route that Willibald took through Italy as he was making his way to the eastern Mediterranean.

### **Elusive archaeological evidence for Irish influence on continental ecclesiastical sites, AD 600–850**

Despite abundant textual evidence for the impact of Irish churchmen, such as Columbanus, Filibert and Fursa on the church in Merovingian Gaul, through their foundation of numerous monasteries or influence on Frankish aristocratic foundations, during the seventh century, archaeological excavations have not uncovered any distinctive. This is true even of the most famous of the Irish foundations, such as the eastern French monastery at Luxeuil, or the Italian monastery at Bobbio, both founded by Columbanus, or the monastery at Noirmoutier, founded by Filibert, or a host of other monasteries across Brittany, Normandy and Picardy.<sup>33</sup>

To a significant extent this is the consequence of a lack of extensive archaeological excavations at these sites but it is also difficult to know what to expect of Irish monastic 'signatures', from an archaeological point of view. This is largely because of the wealth of different ascetic and coenobitic traditions of monasticism witnessed in early medieval Ireland itself and because of the near certainty of the use of local artisans and materials in Gaul to construct the major monastic buildings. For example, Sébastien Bully's excavations at the church of St Martin at Luxeuil (Haute-Saône), the most well-known monastery founded by Columbanus, have yielded a sequence of fourth- to sixth-century inhumation graves in sarcophagi, typical of Merovingian central and southern Gaul, replaced by part of the late seventh-century stone church of St Martin, incorporating the crypt-shrine of St Valbert, the third abbot of Luxeuil.<sup>34</sup> The early Christian architecture is typical of Merovingian central and southern Gaul. The major cult centres were also the most frequently renovated and aggrandised following changes in monastic and architectural traditions, as again witnessed in the church of St Martin at Luxeuil, which was rebuilt on a grander scale with side-apses, in the ninth century. Such a sequence of dynamic change and rebuilding is seen more emphatically within the occupation sequence of the larger-scale excavations at Landevennec (Finistère), in the west of Brittany. The cult focus developed from a small oratory, cemetery, and enclosure, all dated to the sixth century, through its major monumental Carolingian church phases, during which a cloister was added, and finally its Romanesque and Gothic successors.<sup>35</sup>

Very few zones of monasteries beyond their churches and cemeteries have been subject to excavation in France. Bully's excavations at Luxeuil are typical of the parts of monasteries that have been targeted or have been available for excavation. Although, Bully and his team have also surveyed and conducted trial excavations at a quarry several kilometres north of Luxeuil, known as the Hermitage of St Valbert. This site was certainly a quarry for some of the stone used for the sarcophagi excavated at Luxeuil and it is possible, although currently unconfirmed, that the quarry could have been the site of a hermitage for Valbert.<sup>36</sup> If so, such a hermitage would not have been unlike the example suggested to have housed St Martin at Marmoutier (Indre-et-Loire).<sup>37</sup> The only major exceptions to the trend of focussing archaeological attention only on the churches and cemeteries are provided by the excavations at Saint-Denis (Seine-Saint-Denis), on the northeastern outskirts of modern Paris, and St Martin of Tours (Indre-et-Loire), although in these cases too the excavations expanded from the church and cemetery foci.<sup>38</sup>

Another notable exception is the small monastery at Hamage (Nord), excavated by Etienne Louis, between 1991 and 2002. The monastery was founded on the south bank of the River Scarpe, a tributary of the Scheldt, by an aristocratic woman, Gertrude, in the 640s, probably under the influence of Saint Amandus, a Frankish cleric who had been influenced, in turn, by Columbanus. The earliest phase of occupation at Hamage, attributable to the second half of the seventh century, is characterised by small wooden buildings with earth-fast post-hole foundations of rounded or quadrangular shapes, with a ditched and palisaded enclosure to the south and west, and a church to the north of the monastic enclosure dedicated to St Peter.<sup>39</sup> Louis has noted the apparent similarity between these small cell-like buildings and the small



buildings excavated at Whitby (North Yorkshire), and one may cite even closer parallels between those from Hartlepool (Co. Durham), the parent monastery of Hild's foundation at Whitby, and the small seventh-century buildings at Hamage.<sup>40</sup> Given that the founder of Hamage was influenced by St Amandus, and indirectly by Columbanus, and that Hartlepool and Whitby were daughter houses of Aidan's monastery at Lindisfarne, founded according to the traditions of Iona, then it is possible that this mid to late seventh-century phase at Hamage could reflect some Irish influence. However, this is not certain. The small buildings were subsequently demolished at the turn of the eighth century with the construction of an additional church, dedicated to St Mary within the monastic enclosure, with a smaller mausoleum church to its north dedicated to St Eusebia, abbess of Hamage, and the erection of a communal building with multiple rooms and hearths for the women of the Hamage community to the south of the churches. This phase was succeeded in turn by the aggrandisement of the church in the ninth century, with the addition of a cloister, probably reflecting the influence of the Benedictine reforms promoted by the Carolingians.<sup>41</sup> Hence, as at Landevennec, any insular influence was replaced by local and regional continental trends in the eighth and ninth centuries.

However, it is occasionally possible to see greater insular and Irish influence in Brittany at small religious sites. For example at the chapel of Saint-Symphorien at Paule (Côtes-d'Armor), a small chapel was constructed on a dry-stone and gravel sill in the eighth or early ninth century. The chapel was built adjacent to some springs next to an Iron-Age oppidum, possibly reflecting the Christianisation of an earlier cult site. An iron plough coulter was buried at the chapel entrance, a custom attested also in France and the Netherlands between the eighth and eleventh centuries, and a small hoard of silver denier coins of Charles the Bald was buried inside the chapel.<sup>42</sup> The chapel is also associated with a fine copper-alloy bell, thought to have been made between c. AD 700 and 900, in Ireland or western Britain. Recent archaeological evidence of bell-casting from Ireland from these centuries, at sites like Clonfad, (Co. Westmeath) for example would make Ireland a likely source for the Paule bell.<sup>43</sup>

### **Irish/Hiberno-Norse travel, trade and raiding, c. 850–1100**

During the ninth century evidence of the presence of Irish merchants on the Atlantic coast of France is much more scarce, but the beach trading sites facilitating the salt trade were still recorded on the Breton northern banks of the Baie de Bourgneuf, where trade with unnamed merchants continued, at least until the first Scandinavian attacks along the Loire at Nantes and Tours in the later 840s and 850s.<sup>44</sup> Transport of silver and lead also continued from the mines at Melle (Poitou-Charente), including shipments of lead to the monastery of Saint-Denis into the mid ninth century.<sup>45</sup> These shipments travelled down the River Charente, probably via the partially excavated river port at Taillebourg (Charente-Maritime). This river port is particularly intriguing, as it seems to have operated as a transshipment point between the seventh and tenth centuries. Pottery sherds, 685 metal finds and the remains of over ten early medieval log-boats for river transport, suggest that the settlement covered several

hundred metres on the right bank of the Charente. Lead finds with an isotopic signature showing an origin at Melle reflect transshipment of lead and, probably, silver down into the Bay of Biscay. Among the metal finds from the port are six swords of Scandinavian, Hiberno-Norse or Anglo-Saxon types, alongside twenty spearheads and ten axe-heads.<sup>46</sup> The swords, in particular, from Taillebourg are likely to have arrived in the Charente-Maritime region carried by Scandinavian or Hiberno-Norse raiders or traders of the later ninth and tenth centuries, but the contexts in which the weapons were deposited are unclear. Their presence marks a transition in the archaeological reflections of relations between Ireland and the Continent, between the mid ninth and tenth centuries. From this time, the physical evidence of Irish contacts with the wider world are represented largely through artefacts with stylistic decoration and forms influenced by Irish and Scandinavian traditions, described as 'Hiberno-Norse'.

Scandinavian raiding was a phenomenon experienced throughout the coasts of Atlantic Europe, between the mid ninth and tenth centuries, including the coastal and riverine towns of western France, the silver mines at Melle, the port-towns of Lisbon, Cadiz, and Seville in Iberia, and the western Mediterranean shores of North Africa.<sup>47</sup> This raiding activity also reopened the sea route along the Atlantic coast of Iberia and into the Mediterranean, initially probably for the trade of slaves from northern Europe to Islamic Al-Andalus. From the later ninth century and in the tenth century much of that Atlantic trade, from north to south, was probably facilitated by the major Scandinavian-influenced port-hubs of Dublin (a likely slave-exporting port) and Rouen. Their roles in the trading of slaves to Al-Andalus are supported by textual sources and archaeological finds, and their role as shippers of slaves down the Atlantic coast to Iberia continued into the later eleventh century. Trade in slaves from northern Europe to Al-Andalus and a return trade of goods from Iberia and the Mediterranean was facilitated by Jewish merchants based in Rouen, and the Ostmen of Dublin were buying slaves for resale in the ports of western England, such as Bristol, even at the end of the eleventh century.<sup>48</sup>

From the mid-ninth century there is archaeological evidence attesting trade links between northern Europe and Iberia, in the form of small numbers of silver dirhem coins minted at Cordoba. These are found along the western coast of France, in the long-established trading zone between the Rivers Charente and Loire.<sup>49</sup> These coins could evidence Scandinavian loot from Iberia taken northwards but their use in western France could have been as a medium of exchange for other products, such as salt. From the tenth century, and especially from the middle decades of that century, Dublin and Ireland more broadly were integrated into the wider political and exchange networks of the Scandinavian world looking both southwards down the Atlantic coast, northwards to the Atlantic islands, and eastwards to the North Sea and Baltic (and hence Central Asia). Under the Guthrifsson dynasty, this even involved political union of the Kingdoms of Dublin and York, between the 920s and c. 952. The Hiberno-Norse towns of Dublin, Wexford, Waterford and Cork were firmly implicated in these Atlantic trade routes. Archaeological evidence for the importation of objects includes coin evidence, with some single finds in Ireland coming from York and Norway, but also from Frankish and Carolingian sources, and there are also some coins in Ireland with Kufic-

inscriptions, suggesting indirect links with the Arab world. There was probably a continued wine-trade with western France, particularly Poitou. The recovery of silks from Hiberno-Norse Dublin suggests long-distance trade connections with Byzantium or the Muslim world, and the slave trade probably extended from Scotland, across the Irish Sea, and southwards to north Africa, as is recorded in one late ninth century annalistic reference to black men to Dublin.<sup>50</sup>

The incorporation of Irish/Hiberno-Norse networks within those of Scandinavian-influenced eastern England resulted in the presence of Irish merchants in the ports and burghal centres of the West Saxon kingdom of England from the mid to late tenth century. For example, Irish merchants are recorded in Cambridge in the reign of King Edgar in the 970s.<sup>51</sup>

Archaeological indications of trade between Hiberno-Norse Ireland and western Britain in the tenth and eleventh centuries are provided by Scandinavian ring pins and a disc brooch from Chester, and Anglo-Saxon pennies minted at Gloucester but found in Dublin, reflect objects taken back to Ireland in the tenth century.<sup>52</sup> In the late eleventh century, there is also evidence for the importation to Dublin of pottery from southwest England. Just as Irish merchants benefitted from incorporation into North-Sea and Baltic networks, so did Anglo-Saxon merchants benefit from incorporation within the renewed Atlantic networks to Iberia, pioneered by the mariners of Hiberno-Norse Dublin and Norman Rouen. Materials both probably and certainly obtained from Islamic Iberia were coming into London in the mid to late tenth and eleventh centuries, and are present within mercantile archaeological contexts, for example, the silks, figs and grapes (probably eaten as raisins) from Milk Street, London.<sup>53</sup> One of the main export ports of figs and raisins by the later tenth to eleventh centuries was Malaga, in Spain.<sup>54</sup> Other raw materials that arrived via Iberia were gold, mercury, spices and dyes. All were, no doubt, available in Dublin and Ireland's major Hiberno-Norse port towns, and provide the pre-cursor context to the continued growth of Atlantic trade between Ireland, western Britain, western France and Iberia in the Central middle ages, between 1100 and 1300.

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<sup>1</sup> See Jonathan Wooding, 'Trade as a factor in the transmission of texts between Ireland and the Continent in the sixth and seventh centuries', in Proinseas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter (eds.) *Ireland and Europe in the early middle ages: texts and transmission* (Dublin, 2002), pp. 14–26.

<sup>2</sup> See Aidan O'Sullivan, Finbar McCormick, Thomas R. Kerr and Lorcan Harney, *Early medieval Ireland AD 400-1100. The Evidence from Archaeological Excavations* (Dublin, 2014); and Christopher Loveluck, *Northwest Europe in the Early middle ages, c. AD 600-1150. A Comparative Archaeology* (Cambridge, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> See Christer Westerdahl, 'The maritime cultural landscape', *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 21, 1 (1992), 5-14.

<sup>4</sup> See Aidan O'Sullivan *et al*, *Early medieval Ireland AD 400-1100*....., note 2.

<sup>5</sup> See Jonathan Wooding, 'Trade as a factor in the transmission'....., note 1.

<sup>6</sup> I. W. Doyle, 'Mediterranean and Frankish pottery imports in early medieval Ireland', *Journal of Irish Archaeology* 18 (2009), 17-62, see p. 18.

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- <sup>7</sup> A. Kelly, 'The discovery of Phocaen Red slip-ware (PRSW) form 3 and Bii ware (LR1 amphorae) on sites in Ireland: an analysis within a broader framework', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 110C (2010), 35-88, see p. 42
- <sup>8</sup> See Aidan O'Sullivan *et al.*, *Early medieval Ireland AD 400-1100*....., p. 250.
- <sup>9</sup> See I. W. Doyle, 'Mediterranean and Frankish pottery', pp. 40-56; and Aidan O'Sullivan *et al.*, *Early medieval Ireland 400-1100*....., pp 252-255.
- <sup>10</sup> Ewan Campbell, 'The archaeological evidence for external contacts: imports, trade and economy in Celtic Britain, AD 400-800', in Ken Dark, ed., *External Contacts and the Economy of Late and Post-Roman Britain* (Woodbridge, 1996), 83-96, see pp. 86-88.
- <sup>11</sup> Ewan Campbell, 'Glass', in Rachel C. Barrowman, Coleen E. Batey and Christopher D. Morris, C., *Excavations at Tintagel Castle, Cornwall, 1990-1999* (London, 2007) pp. 222-228.
- <sup>12</sup> Ewan Campbell, *Continental and Maritime Imports to Atlantic Britain and Ireland, AD 400-800* (York, 2007), pp. 127-132.
- <sup>13</sup> See Jeremy Knight, 'Seasoned with Salt: Insular-Gallic contacts in the early memorial stones and cross slabs', in Ken Dark, ed., *External Contacts and the Economy of Late and Post-Roman Britain*, (Woodbridge, 1996), 109-120, see pp. 117-119.
- <sup>14</sup> See Ewan Campbell, *Continental and Maritime Imports*.....; and Aidan O'Sullivan *et al.*, *Early medieval Ireland 400-1100*....., p. 255.
- <sup>15</sup> See B. Randoïn, 'Essai de classification chronologique de la céramique de Tours du IV<sup>e</sup> au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Recherches sur Tours* 1 (1981), 103-114; and Barry Cunliffe and Galliou, P., *Les Fouilles du Yaudet en Ploulec'h, Côtes-d'Armor, Volume 3: Du quatrième siècle apr. J.-C. à aujourd'hui* (Oxford, 2007).
- <sup>16</sup> See Ewan Campbell, *Continental and Maritime Imports*....., p.65.
- <sup>17</sup> Jonathan Wooding, 'Cargoes in Trade along the Western Seaboard', in Ken Dark, ed., *External Contacts and the Economy of Late Roman and Post-Roman Britain* (Woodbridge, 1996), 67-82, see pp. 75-76; and Ewan Campbell, *Continental and Maritime Imports*
- <sup>18</sup> See Jean-Michel Picard, 'L'Irlande et la Normandie avant les Normands (VII<sup>e</sup>-IX<sup>e</sup> siècles)', *Annales de Normandie*, 2<sup>e</sup> trim. No.1 (1997), 3-24; and Olivier Bruand, 'Pénétration et circulation du sel de l'Atlantique en France septentrionale (VIII<sup>e</sup>-XI<sup>e</sup> siècles)', *Annales De Bretagne Et Des Pays De L'Ouest* 115, No. 3 (2008), 7-32.
- <sup>19</sup> See Olivier Bruand, 'Pénétration et circulation du sel' ....., p. 18.
- <sup>20</sup> See Wendy Davies, *Small Worlds. The Village Community in Early medieval Brittany* (London, 1988).
- <sup>21</sup> See Olivier Bruand, 'Pénétration et circulation du sel' .....
- <sup>22</sup> Eric Rieth, Catherine Carrière-Desbois and Virginie Serna, *L'épave de Port Berteau II (Charente-Maritime). Un caboteur fluvio-maritime du haut Moyen Âge et son contexte nautique*, Documents d'Archéologie Française 86 (Paris, 2001).
- <sup>23</sup> See Michael Dolley, *The Hiberno-Norse Coins in the British Museum*, (London, 1966), pp. 13-14.
- <sup>24</sup> See Jonathan Wooding, 'Cargoes in trade' ....., p. 73.
- <sup>25</sup> See Ewan Campbell, *Continental and Maritime Imports* .....
- <sup>26</sup> See David Griffiths and S. Bangert, 'Ceramic: The St Menas Ampulla', in David Griffiths, Robert A Philpott and Geoff Egan, *Meols, The archaeology of the North Wirral Coast* (Oxford, 2007), pp.58-60.
- <sup>27</sup> See Ewan Campbell, *Continental and Maritime Imports*....., pp. 78-80; and Alan Lane and Ewan Campbell, *Dunadd. An Early Dalriadic Capital* (Oxford, 2000).

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<sup>28</sup> Jean-Michel Picard, 'Les réseaux martinieniens en Irlande médiévale', *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest* 119, No. 3 (2012), 41-54, at 43-9.

<sup>29</sup> See Philippe Depreux, *Les Sociétés occidentales du milieu du VI<sup>e</sup> à la fin du IX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Rennes, 2002), p. 145.

<sup>30</sup> W. Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, 1946), p. 40. For *hospitalia Scottorum/Scothorum*, see Picard, 'L'Irlande et la Normandie avant les Normands', p. 19; and the Capitulary of the Council of Meaux (845), Canon 40, in W. Hartmann, ed., *Monumenta Germaniae Historica (MGH), Consilia III* (Hannover, 1984). The *scholae peregrinorum* of Rome are attested principally in the *Liber Pontificalis*'s chapter on the pontificate of Leo III (795-810), ed. L. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1886-1957), II, p. 6. On the military abilities of the *scholae* see Levison, *op. cit.*, and Depreux, *Sociétés occidentales*, p. 148.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas O'Loughlin, *Adomnan and the Holy Places – The Perceptions of an Insular Monk on the Locations of the Biblical Drama* (London, 2007).

<sup>32</sup> See Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy. Communications and Commerce, AD 300-900* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 130-134.

<sup>33</sup> See Jean-Michel Picard, 'L'Irlande et la Normandie'.....; and Michael Richter, *Ireland And Her Neighbours In The Seventh Century* (Dublin, 1999).

<sup>34</sup> S. Bully, L. Flocchi, A. Baradat, M. Čaušević-Bully, A. Bully, M. Dupuis and D. Vuillermoz, 'L'église Saint-Martin de Luxeuil-les-Bains (Haute-Saône). Première campagne', *Bulletin du centre d'études médiévales d'Auxerre* 13 (2009), 33-8.

<sup>35</sup> See Alan Bardel and Ronan Perennec, 'Abbaye de Landevennec: l'évolution du contexte funéraire depuis le haut Moyen Âge', in Armelle Alduc-Le Bagousse, ed., *Inhumations et édifices religieux au Moyen Âge entre Loire et Seine*, 121-158, (Caen, 2004), pp. 133-152.

<sup>36</sup> Bully *et al.*, 'L'église Saint-Martin de Luxeuil-les-Bains', n. 35.

<sup>37</sup> É. Lorans, 'Aux origines du monastère de Marmoutier: le témoignage de l'archéologie', *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest* 119, No. 3 (2012), 177-203, at 177-9.

<sup>38</sup> See Michel Wyss 'Saint-Denis', in Stiegemann, C. and Wemhoff, M., eds., 799: *Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit, Beiträge zum Katalog der Ausstellung Paderborn 1999*, (Mainz, 1999), pp. 138-141; and Henri Galinié, ed., *Tours antique et médiéval. Lieux de vie, Temps de la ville, 40 ans d'archéologie urbaine, 30<sup>e</sup> Supplément à la Revue Archéologique du Centre de la France* (Tours, 2007).

<sup>39</sup> See Étienne Louis and Joël Blondiaux, 'L'Abbaye Mérovingienne et Carolingienne de Hamage (Nord). Vie, Mort et Sépulture dans une Communauté Monastique Féminine', in Armelle Alduc-Le Bagousse, ed., *Inhumations de prestige ou prestige de l'inhumation?*, 117-149, (Caen, 2009), p. 119.

<sup>40</sup> See Étienne Louis, 'A De-Romanized Landscape in Northern Gaul : The Scarpe valley from the 4th to the 9th century', in William Bowden, Luke Lavan and Carlos Machado, eds., *Recent Research on the Late Antique Countryside*, 479-504 (Leiden & Boston, 2004), p. 497 ; and Christopher Loveluck, 'Anglo-Saxon Hartlepool and the foundations of English Christian identity: the wider context and importance of the monastery', in Robin Danielshristopher, *Anglo-Saxon Hartlepool and the Foundations of English Christianity. An Archaeology of the Anglo-Saxon Monastery*, 186-208, eds., Robin Daniels and Christopher Loveluck (Hartlepool, 2007).

<sup>41</sup> Étienne Louis and Joël Blondiaux, 'L'Abbaye Mérovingienne'....., pp. 120-123.

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- <sup>42</sup> J. Le Gall and Y. Menez, *La chapelle de Saint-Symphorien à Paule*, Rapport de fouille annuelle 2008, SRA de l'Archéologie de Bretagne (Rennes, 2008), and Loveluck, *Northwest Europe in the Early Middle Ages*, p. 45.
- <sup>43</sup> See Aidan O'Sullivan *et al.*, *Early medieval Ireland 400-1100*....., p. 140.
- <sup>44</sup> See Wendy Davies, *Small Worlds*....., p. 100; Henri Galinié, ed., *Tours antique et médiéval*....., p. 18.
- <sup>45</sup> F. Tereygeol, 2007: 'Production and circulation of silver and secondary products (lead and glass) from Frankish royal silver mines at Melle (eighth to tenth century)', in Joachim Henning, ed., 123-134, *Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium, Vol. 1: The Heirs of the Roman West*, 123-134 (Berlin, 2007), p. 123.
- <sup>46</sup> See Annie Dumont and Jean-François Marioti, eds., *Archéologie et histoire du fleuve Charente. Taillebourg-Port d'Envaux: une zone portuaire du haut Moyen Âge sur le fleuve Charente*, (Dijon, 2013).
- <sup>47</sup> C. Mazzoli-Guintard, 'Les Normands dans le sud de la péninsule Ibérique au milieu du IX<sup>e</sup> siècle: aspects du peuplement d' al-Andalus', *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest* 103, No. 2 (1996), 27-37, see pp. 28-29.
- <sup>48</sup> See J. Hillaby, 'Jewish Colonization in the Twelfth Century', in Patricia Skinner, ed., *The Jews in medieval Britain. Historical, Literary and Archaeological Perspectives*, 15-40 (Woodbridge, 2003), p. 16; and Aidan O'Sullivan *et al.*, *Early medieval Ireland 400-1100*....., p. 275.
- <sup>49</sup> See F. Clément, 'Les monnaies arabes et à legend arabe trouvées dans le Grand Ouest', *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest*, 115, No. 2 (2008), 159-187, see pp. 160-161.
- <sup>50</sup> See Aidan O'Sullivan *et al.*, *Early medieval Ireland 400-1100*.....p., 275.
- <sup>51</sup> See Henry R. Loyn, *Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest* (London, 1962), p. 96.
- <sup>52</sup> David Griffiths, *The Vikings of the Irish Sea* (Stroud, 2010), pp. 133-136.
- <sup>53</sup> See Christopher Loveluck, *Northwest Europe in the Early middle ages*....., pp. 322-325.
- <sup>54</sup> See M. Valor and A. Gutiérrez, *The Archaeology of medieval Spain 1100-1500* (Sheffield, 2014), p. 126.